REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

Date of entry in Register:	27 January 1999
Name of applicant/court:	United International Pictures (New Zealand)
Applicant to the Labelling Body:	Not Applicable
Title of Publication:	Saving Private Ryan
Other Known Titles:	Not Stated
Director:	Steven Spielberg
Producers:	Steven Spielberg, Ian Bryce, Mark Gordon, Gary Levinsohn
Publisher:	Not Applicable
Author:	Not Applicable
Format:	Film 35mm
Country of Origin:	USA
Language:	English

Components of film originally examined:

Feature:	Saving Private Ryan	Running time:	170.47
Trailers:	Nil	Running time:	
		Total Running time:	170.47

Excision/Alteration: No.

Reason(s) for Excision:

Not Applicable.

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Classification Decision:

Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 15 years.

Display Conditions:

Nil.

Descriptive Note:

Depicts graphic and realistic war scenes.

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Direction to issue a label has been given on: 24 December 1998

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SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:

Saving Private Ryan deals with matters such as horror, cruelty and violence in terms of s.3(1). Nothing in this film falls within s.3(2). The Board gave “particular weight” to the extent and degree to which, and the manner in which, the film describes, depicts, or otherwise deals with “[a]cts of torture, the infliction of serious physical harm, or acts of significant cruelty” in s.3(3)(a)(i). There are many such scenes in the film. The Board also considered the matters in s.3(4). These include the extraordinarily powerful emotional effect of the film, its cinematic impact (which would be significantly greater than in video format because of more visual detail), its importance as an educational and cultural memoire of the sacrifices made in World War II, and its importance as an example of a well-made film in the war movie genre.

The Board balanced the graphic violence identified as a “particular” concern in s.3(3)(a)(i) with the film’s obvious merit in s.3(4). Significant in this regard is the fact that the violence is both realistic and is set in the context of a world war. The Board was satisfied that the violence portrayed in the film is an honest and genuine attempt to convey both the horror of war and the enormous sacrifice made by a generation of young men and women. This sets the film apart from other films that may show significant violence. Given the honest purpose of the film and its significance as a reminder of the horrors of war and the sacrifices made, the Board was of the view that the public good would be served by making the film as widely available as possible, but not to audiences who could be adversely affected by the portrayals of violence. Audiences who could be adversely affected would be those upon whom the educational and historical benefits of the film would be overwhelmed or subsumed by the power and emotional impact of the scenes of violence.

The Board was of the view that the public good would be injured if this film were made available to persons under 15 years of age who are likely to be both insufficiently emotionally equipped to cope with the depictions of violence and not as knowledgeable about the historical context in which the events in the film take place. In the Board's view, person's 15 years of age and over are more likely to be emotionally equipped to cope with the scenes of violence and are more likely to have studied in school the history of the twentieth century. They would consequently be able to recognise the significance of the film without being overwhelmed by its depictions of violence. The Board consequently classified *Saving Private Ryan* as "objectionable unless its availability is restricted to persons 15 years of age and over" with a notice advising that the film "depicts graphic and realistic war scenes".

OFLC Ref: 9801480